

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 EUR-25 AID-20 OMB-01

DRC-01 /144 W

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O P 151655Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4345

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA PRIORITY

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 4656

E.O. 11652 - GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ES, HO

SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR-HONDURAS PROBLEM

1. FONMIN BORGONOVO INFORMED ME IN PHONE CONVERSATION LAST EVENING (DEC 14) THAT GEN SOMOZA HAD BROUGHT PRES MOLINA AN "ENCOURAGING MESSAGE OF GOODWILL" FROM GEN LOPEZ ARELLANO DURING SOMOZA'S BRIEF AIRPORT STOP ENROUTE TO MEXICO. ACCORDING TO SOMOZA, LOPEZ WAS "VERY UNDERSTANDING OF MOLINA'S SITUATION" WITH RESPECT TO THE BI-LATERAL PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. BORGONOVO ALSO LET ME KNOW THAT HE WAS QUITE AWARE THAT LOPEZ'S ATTENTION THESE DAYS WAS CENTERED ON INTERNAL MATTERS AND THAT HONDURAN PRESS WAS SUBJECTING LOPEZ'S GOVERNMENT TO CONSIDERABLE CRITICISM OVER DOMESTIC ISSUES.

2. BORGONOVO TOLD ME THAT THE SALVADORAN AND HONDURAN NEGOTIATORS WERE THAT DAY WORKING ON A JOINT STATEMENT FOR THE PRESS TO BE RELEASED TODAY (DEC 15) UPON CONCLUSION OF
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THE CURRENT ROUND OF TALKS. GOES LOOKED TO ITS CHIEF NEGOTIATOR,

GALINDO POHL, TO REACH MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY WORDING WITH HONDURANS WHICH WOULD SUSTAIN CORDIAL ATMOSPHERE AND LEAVE DOOR OPEN FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS. BORGONOVO DESCRIBED THE DEC 13 LUNCHEON HOSTED BY MEXICANS AS "CORDIAL BUT SUPERFICIAL". GALINDO HJFJ REPORTED THAT BOTH SIDES RELAXED AND ENJOYED THEMSELVES IN VERY PLEASANT PERSONAL REPARTEE. HOWEVER, FONMIN BATRES HAD EXCUSED HIMSELF FROM PARTICIPATING IN LUNCHEON ON GROUNDS OF PRESSING BUSINESS ELSEWHERE.

3. BORGONOVO CORRECTLY SAW THE SITUATION IN EL SALVADOR ONE EVE OF DEC 15 DEADLINE AS BEING FAR LESS TENSE THAN TWO WEEKS AGO. HE CITED RESTRAINT OF LOCAL PRESS AND ABSENCE OF APPREHENSIVE STORIES OR ABRASIVE EDITORIALS ON THE BILATERAL PROBLEM; AND HE WAS EVIDENTLY RELIEVED THAT REPORTERS WERE NOT HOUNDING HIM AT THIS JUNCTURE. NEITHER OF THE DEC 15 MORNING PAPERS MENTIONED THE NEGOTIATIONS OR BILATERAL ISSUES WITH HONDURAS.

4. WE HAVE RELIABLE REPORT THAT CHIEFS OF STAFF OF SALVADORAN AND HONDURAN ARMIES MET DEC 13 AT BORDER TOWN OF CITALA ON HONDURAN INITIATIVE AND GAVE ONE ANOTHER ASSURANCES THAT THEIR RESPECTIVE ARMED FORCES WOULD KEEP THE PEACE FOR THE HOLIDAYS. SALVADORAN COS TOOK OCCASION TO TRY TO DISPEL FOR HIS HONDURAN COUNTERPART THE UNFOUNDED AND ALARMIST RUMORS AND REPORTS THAT EL SALVADOR WAS PREPARING FOR AGGRESSIVE MILITARY ACTION.

5. BORGONOVO SAID THAT HE CONSIDERED HONDURAN NOTE TO OAS SEC GEN SALVADORAN DENUNCIATION OF BOGOTA PACT TO BE "RESTRAINED". HE DID NOT CONTEMPLATE MAKING FURTHER ISSUE OF THIS MATTER IN OAS SINCE HE JUDGED HONDURAS' ACTION "NORMAL" UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. THUS, HE MERELY PASSED THE NOTE TO HIS LEGAL STAFF FOR STUDY.
MOSKOWITZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS INTERRUPTION, ARMISTICE, ARMED FORCES, PRESS COMMENTS, PEACE TALKS, POLITICAL SITUATION, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: smithrj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SANSAA04656
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SAN SALVADOR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731222/aaaaaqhf.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: smithrj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <17-Jan-2002 by smithrj>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EL SALVADOR-HONDURAS PROBLEM
TAGS: PFOR, ES, HO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005